

## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Orthodox Church of America

A Parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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*August 29, 2021*

*The beheading of the Holy, Glorious, prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John.*

*(Strick Fast)*

- 9:10 am - Hours
- 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy
- Epistle:* 1Cor. 4: 9-16 Acts 13:25-33
- Gospel:* Matt. 17:14-23 Mark 6:14-30
- **Coffee Hour** – Church Hall. Everyone is invited for a fellowship followed the service.

### *Schedule of Services*

**Saturday, September 4**

- 5:00 pm – Great Vespers.

**Sunday, September 5**

*Holy Prophet Zacharia & Righteous Elizabeth, parents of St. John the Baptist*

- 9:10 am - Hours
- 9:30 am – Divine Liturgy

♦ We are happy that you have joined us for worship today and hope that you will join us for coffee hour after the service. Please note that reception of the Holy Eucharist is only for baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared with prayer, fasting, and periodic confession. You are encouraged to receive the blessed bread that is offered at the end of the service and which may also be offered to you by one of your neighbors during Communion.

*The Beheading of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John.*

The Beheading of the Prophet, Forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist: The Evangelists Matthew (Mt.14:1-12) and Mark (Mark 6:14-29) provide accounts about the martyr end of John the Baptist in the year 32 after the Birth of Christ. Following the Baptism of the Lord, Saint John the Baptist was locked up in prison by Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch (ruler of one fourth of the Holy Land) and governor of Galilee. (After the death of king Herod the Great, the Romans divided the territory of Palestine into four parts, and put a governor in charge of each part. Herod Antipas received Galilee from the emperor Augustus). The prophet of God John openly denounced Herod for having left his lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, and then instead cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Luke 3:19-20). On his birthday, Herod made a feast for dignitaries, the elders and a thousand chief citizens. Salome, the daughter of Herod, danced before the guests and charmed Herod. In gratitude to the girl, he swore to give her whatever she would ask, up to half his kingdom. The vile girl on the advice of her wicked mother Herodias asked that she be given the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod became apprehensive, for he feared the wrath of God for the murder of a prophet, whom earlier he had heeded. He also feared the people, who loved the holy Forerunner. But because of the guests and his careless oath, he gave orders to cut off the head of Saint John and to give it to Salome. According to Tradition, the mouth of the dead preacher of repentance once more opened and proclaimed: "Herod, you should not have the wife of your brother Philip." Salome took the platter with the head of Saint John and gave it to her mother. The frenzied Herodias repeatedly stabbed the tongue of the prophet with a needle and buried his holy head in a unclean place.

But the pious Joanna, wife of Herod's steward Chuza, buried the head of John the Baptist in an earthen vessel on the Mount of Olives, where Herod had a parcel of land. (The Uncovering of the Venerable Head is celebrated February 24). The holy body of John the Baptist was taken that night by his disciples and buried at Sebastia, there where the wicked deed had been done. After the murder of Saint John the Baptist, Herod continued to govern for a certain time. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, later sent Jesus Christ to him, Whom he mocked (Luke 23:7-12). The judgment of God came upon Herod, Herodias and Salome, even during their earthly life. Salome, crossing the River Sikoris in winter, fell through the ice. The ice gave way in such a way that her body was in the water, but her head was trapped above the ice. It was similar to how she once had danced with her feet upon the ground, but now she flailed helplessly in the icy water. Thus she was trapped until that time when the sharp ice cut through her neck. Her corpse was not found, but they brought the head to Herod and Herodias, as once they had brought them the head of Saint John the Baptist. The Arab king Aretas, in revenge for the disrespect shown his daughter, made war against Herod. The defeated Herod suffered the wrath of the Roman emperor Caius Caligula (37-41) and was exiled with Herodias first to Gaul, and then to Spain. The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, a Feast day established by the Church, is also a strict fast day because of the grief of Christians at the violent death of the saint. In some Orthodox cultures pious people will not eat food from a flat plate, use a knife, or eat food that is round in shape on this day.



### *Intercessory Prayers*

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Genevieve Bobenko, Barbara Bogart, Michael Bzik, Mary Ann Dolak, Barbara Kary, Margaret Kovalycsik, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Patricia Galley.

### *Birthday Greeting*

Happy Birthday go out this week to **Betty Czech** – September 1. May God continue to enrich her life with the fullness of joy and happiness for many years – Mnogaya Lyeta!

### **Ours in Trust**

The works of both God and man are manifest everywhere and any place. If we would only look, we would see how man has worked in harmony with nature to sustain himself. Man's gratitude to our Lord for His infinite blessings is beautifully expressed in Psalm 104: "*Bless the Lord, O my soul. My God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty,*" Then, after describing how God is not only the Creator, but the Sustainer of this awesome universe, St. David the Psalmist joyously continues: "*O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches.*"

Observing how God consistently recreated life both in the succession of generations, as well as in the annual renewal of the seasons, David the Psalmist vows: "*I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live and while I have my being. I will be glad in the Lord.*"

We need to echo the words of David. Whether we are viewing the splendor of the Grand Canyon or a tiny burbling waterfall, we should be impressed by how the earth is filled with His riches. Let us pray that we will have the wisdom to conserve and pass on what has been given to us in trust for generations to come.

